

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

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September 8, 2010

His Excellency President Nicolas Sarkozy
Palais de l'Elysee/Presidence de la Republique
Monsieur le President de la Republique
Palais de l'Elysee
55, rue du faubourg Saint-Honore
75008 Paris

Your Excellency President Sarkozy,

International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) is an NGO with the UN consultative status, and works for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination through the partnership with many other NGOs including Mouvement contre le Racisme at pour l'Amitie entre les Peuples (MRAP) and Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

Deeply concerned about the recent discriminatory policies and measures of the French government regarding Roma people, travellers and migrants that have been taken under the name of combating crimes and keeping peace-and-order, IMADR would like to urge the government of France to reconsider these discriminatory policies and, in particular, to immediately stop mass deportation of Roma people.

Following the riot happened in July this year, the government of France has been making announcements seeking to ascribe "crimes" to the people of Roma, travellers and migrants in a lamp. In August, It has started the dismantlement of the so-called illegal camps in different parts of France and mass deportation of Roma people to Romania or Bulgaria. Taking finger-prints from those who are to be sent back for the purpose of preventing them from the re-entry into France is a highly questionable measure. In addition, it has also been announced that the government plans to take away the French citizenship as a sanction of certain kinds of crimes committed by migrants.

These policies and measures strongly remind us of racially discriminatory treatment of Roma people who were at that time described as "security risk factor." Deprivation of citizenship was one of the inhumane measures taken by

NGO in consultative status (Special) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations



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the Vichy regime against Jewish people in France during the World War II. Discriminatory policies based on coercion and exclusion does not solve any problem, but creates a chain of hatred and violence.

Strong concern about the recent policies and measures of the French government was also expressed by the UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination which examined the French report on 11th and 12th August. In its Concluding Observations (adopted on 27 August) the Committee recommended the state party to avoid collectively deporting Roma people, to strive for lasting solutions and to resolve issues on the basis of full respect for their human rights.

Many of Roma people escaped to Western Europe including France from exclusion, discrimination and extreme poverty that they had suffered, and have long lived there. Therefore, deportation of these people drives them again into persecution, extreme poverty and despair or desperation. It is afraid that such policies of France have possible impacts on neighbouring countries with some other states following the French measures. Indeed, it is reported that a similar move has been initiated in Italy.

France has enjoyed the reputation of a country of “liberte, egalite, fraternite” and won world’s respect as a human rights forerunner with its human rights declaration made for the first time in the human history. IMADR strongly urge President Sarkozy to withdraw racially discriminatory policies towards people of Roma and migrants.

Yours truly,

Nimalka Fernando
President of IMADR

Kinhide Mushakoji
President of IMADR-Japan Committee

Yuriko Hara
Secretary-General of IMADR